

NH Department of Agriculture, Markets & Food

BUREAU OF MARKETS

The primary mission of the Bureau of Markets, as a regulatory unit of the New Hampshire Department of Agriculture, Markets and Food, is to assure compliance with New Hampshire laws and the administrative rules of the department governing the marketing of farm commodities.

PROGRAMS

Feed, Fertilizer, Liming Materials, and Horticultural Growing Media:

New Hampshire laws require that Commercial Feeds including Pet Foods, Commercial Fertilizers, Agricultural Liming Materials, and Horticultural Growing Media be registered annually prior to distribution in the state. Products must meet label requirements intended to provide consumers with important information about the analysis, ingredients and intended uses of the product. The Bureau samples and tests several hundred products each year to assure compliance with label guarantees.

Seed:

The New Hampshire Seed Law requires a license for seed labelers who distribute seed for planting purposes. The law requires seed packages to be labeled with information relative to germination and purity percentages. A list of weed seed species that are designated as either restricted or prohibited is established under the administrative rules of the program. Samples of seed are collected in the marketplace and tested for conformance with label guarantees.

Seal of Quality:

A voluntary program that provides superior quality standards for farm products. Producers who subscribe to the program agree to maintain high quality standards verified by periodic visits by Bureau inspectors. Participating producers are permitted to use the NH Seal of Quality logo design in advertising and on product packaging. The Bureau has developed standards for producers of Maple products, Apples, Cider, Eggs, Honey and Raspberries. Promotional materials including farm signs and stickers displaying the Seal of Quality logo design are made available to participants at cost.

Organic Certification:

The Bureau is accredited by USDA to provide organic certification services to producers of organic food. Prospective certified producers must complete an annual application demonstrating adherence to the program's organic production standards. On-site inspection visits are conducted with random follow-up visits to verify compliance with the rules. Application and inspection fees are associated with this program. The Bureau offers promotional material, including farm signs and stickers displaying the NHDAMF Certified Farm logo design, for use in advertising and product packaging.

Farm Products - Standards and Grades:

The Bureau provides inspection services for a variety of farm products produced in the state including: Apples, Cider, Eggs, Maple Products, Potatoes and Honey. State laws and rules covering each of these products specify labeling and grading requirements.

Inspections at points of production, distribution and sale are conducted to assure the quality of New Hampshire farm products in the marketplace. Bureau personnel are licensed by the USDA Fruit and Vegetable Division to conduct shipping point inspections on apples destined for export. Controlled atmosphere apple storage facilities are registered and tested during the apple storage year. Through cooperative agreements with the USDA Poultry Division, packers of shell eggs are inspected quarterly and Poultry products purchased through the school lunch program are monitored for quality and safety.

Considerable emphasis is given to maintaining the quality of Maple Syrup and Apple Cider produced in the state through educational programs, inspection and testing. Sugarhouses and cider mills are visited regularly to review for proper grading, quality and packaging safety.

The Bureau also administers the state laws relative to the labeling of farm products identified as "Native" or "Local," the Native Lumber Grading and Certification program and monitors farmland enrolled in the state's Agricultural Lands Preservation Program.

Best Management Practices:

State law under RSA 431:33 requires the department to respond to complaints involving the mismanagement of manure, agricultural compost and chemical fertilizer. The Bureau coordinates inspections to sites where these materials are suspected of causing environmental contamination or nuisance type problems. The Department has published and distributes a "Manual of Best Management Practices for Agriculture in New Hampshire." Complaint resolution focuses on non-punitive methods.

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